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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 000578

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SUBJECT: DRC: MBUSA NYAMWISI -- YESTERDAY'S MAN?

REF: KINSHASA 535

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Samuel V. Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a June 9 meeting with TDY poloff, Minister of Decentralization and Territorial Development Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi expressed bitterness and resignation about developments in the DRC. An ethnic Nande, who in October was demoted from Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mbusa strongly criticized former North Kivu governor Eugene Serufuli and efforts to promote the division ("decoupage") of North Kivu into a Nande-dominated province and a Rwandophone-dominated province. He also criticized almost everyone around Kabila as "bandits," as well as the way regime decision making has become more opaque and more erratic, although most of his criticisms were vague in details. There appears to be little likelihood that Mbusa will survive the next cabinet reshuffle, which is expected soon (reftel). End summary.

Mbusa, the Player

¶2. (C) Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi has been a minister since June 2003 when he joined Kabila's transitional government as part of the peace process. He served as Minister of Regional Cooperation before being named as Foreign Minister in Kabila's first government after the 2006 elections. In the October 2008 cabinet reshuffle, Mbusa was moved to the Decentralization and Territorial Development portfolio, which was widely seen as a demotion. Before joining the government, he had been a rebel leader heading the Rally for Congolese Democracy-Liberation Movement (RCD-ML) from 2000. A native of Butembo, whose father's family hails from Beni, he had long been seen as probably the most prominent and powerful leader of the ethnic Nande community of North Kivu's Grand Nord. He created the Forces for Renewal Party to contest the 2006 elections but withdrew as a presidential candidate and threw his support to Kabila. In the elections, the Forces for Renewal emerged as North Kivu's largest party and was able to choose one of its senior members, Julien Paluku, as North Kivu's governor.

On the Politics of Decoupage

¶3. (C) When asked about developments in North Kivu, in particular the role of former North Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli, the rise of Rwandophones and decoupage, Mbusa clearly indicated that he was unhappy with the recent course of events. Regarding decoupage, he indicated that the irony is that while decoupage might win popular support in a free election in the Grand Nord, it almost certainly would lose in southern North Kivu, where former governor Serufuli is promoting the idea. While indicating that he personally

opposed decoupage because the relative stability in the Grand Nord serves to "cool down" all of North Kivu province, Mbusa said decoupage is an attractive idea to many in the Grand Nord who believe their region would be more peaceful and prosperous if separated from the south. Grand Nord residents, he said, blame the regional instability on the dynamics of southern North Kivu, notably the Rwandophone versus non-Rwandophone conflict, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict and the interference of Rwanda.

14. (C) Borrowing a pen and checking the details with a colleague on the phone, Mbusa argued that decoupage would be defeated in a democratic election in the Petit Nord. He pointed out that of the 18 provincial deputies in southern North Kivu, eight were Hutus none were Tutsis, while the other ten were from non-Rwandophone groups -- three were Hunde, two Nyanga, two Shi, one Kumo, one Kano and one Bangobango. He said the non-Rwandophones, fearing domination of the Hutus and Tutsis, would probably all oppose decoupage as would at least a few of the Hutus. He also noted that ethnic Tutsis, though they did not win a single seat in the provincial assembly in a direct election, were over-represented in the government *- Tutsis held two of ten ministerial slots in the provincial cabinet and one of four of North Kivu's seats in the National Senate in Kinshasa.

The Trouble with Serufuli

15. (C) Decoupage and Rwandophonie said Mbusa, are Serufuli's and Rwanda's way to try to win power in North Kivu. Serufuli

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has never been elected to anything. As in the past, he wants to come to power via the barrel of a gun, this time with the support of powerful patrons like Kabila and Rwandan President Kagame. Serufuli enjoys little real popularity in North Kivu with Hutus, less with Tutsis and almost none with anyone else.

16. (C) Mbusa said Serufuli should go to prison because of his corruption. Before Serufuli, North Kivu governors lived modestly, traveling around on scooters or small motorcycles and mixing with the people. Serufuli, by contrast, traveled in SUV convoys and involved himself in major business deals. Serufuli, in Mbusa's view, does not govern by convincing people or winning votes. Rather, "he gives people \$1,000 or \$10,000 when he wants their support."

17. (C) In an interesting contrast to Serufuli, who asserts that when Nande govern North Kivu, Rwandophones are repressed, Mbusa said that when a Hutu or a Tutsi governs North Kivu, people are killed. Rwandophones always bring their Hutu-Tutsi problems and issues with the indigenous population with them and it infects all political activity. He did make an exception for former Governor Leonard Kanyamuhanga, a Tutsi appointed by Kigali in 1996 who died in office in 2000; Mbusa thought he was "a very good man." Perhaps not surprisingly, he thought current Governor Paluku, a Nande from Mbusa's Forces for Renewal Party is an "honest man...He is straight. He does not rob. He does not have foreign bank accounts or many houses." Mbusa also expressed high praise for Father Appolinaire Malu Malu, an ethnic Nande and Catholic priest who heads Congo's Independent Electoral Commission and supervises the Amani peace process in the Kivus. Malu Malu, in Mbusa's view, is "a brilliant man" and "very courageous" who acts in the interest of the country.

Disgusted with Kinshasa

18. (C) Mbusa made no effort to disguise his contempt for the Kabila regime. When asked about the politics of Kinshasa, Mbusa responded that what is most notable is "the absence of politics." In Kinshasa today, all meaningful power is concentrated with Kabila and a handful of "bandits" around him who make all the decisions without any meaningful input

from anyone else. This absence of politics is accompanied by the "absence of the state" and an absence of conscience.⁸ He went on to say that "the state has no capacity. There are no roads, no administration and no police."

¶9. (C) When asked who these Kabila advisors were, Mbusa shrugged and named only Augustin Katumba Mwanke ("a bandit") and General John Numbi, Inspector General of the police ("a robber"). TDY poloff's attempts to probe further only prompted Mbusa to repeat the description: "They are just bandits." Asking about others in the government yielded similar answers *- Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, who replaced Mbusa as foreign minister, is "a mercenary"; National Assembly President Evariste Boshab was "a bandit." Mbusa, changing tack, said these individuals will not allow the presidential elections of 2011 to take place. Conditions on the ground will not allow elections to be held as the state lacks the administrative capacity to run elections and the security situation is too poor in many areas -- "the state has disintegrated."

¶10. (C) When TDY poloff noted that Mbusa was far more negative on the course of Congolese politics than when they had last met, Mbusa responded that he and TDY poloff had last met during the transition, a very different time. During the transition, said Mbusa, there was considerable confidence in the future. Moreover, the government of that time was far more inclusive and open, marked by meaningful debate and discussion amongst ministers and senior advisors.

¶11. (C) Now, by contrast, policy making is completely opaque with all power held by a small group of people who do things suddenly and erratically, "without any preparation." Policies swing from one extreme to another with no warning and no planning, and "every initiative fails." He pointed to the case of North Kivu where, he said every policy has completely contradicted what went before and what followed. "First they attack Nkunda, then they make peace with Nkunda, then they attack Nkunda, then they make peace with Nkunda, then they attack Nkunda, then they make peace with Rwanda. Who knows what comes next?"

Out of the East

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¶12. (C) When asked about the future, Mbusa said his children had asked him "why can't we go to the United States?" TDY poloff asked Mbusa if he ever goes back to North Kivu. Somewhat surprisingly, Mbusa said he did not. He had been back to Beni-Butembo about a year ago, but his work in government has kept him in Kinshasa. If he took a vacation, he said he probably would go to Nairobi rather than home. (Comment: Although he did not say so directly, it was clear from his manner that he no longer felt comfortable in the Grand Nord. End comment.)

¶13. (C) Comment: Mbusa's downbeat attitude stood in stark contrast to previous meetings with TDY poloff when Mbusa was an ambitious rebel and later an up-and-coming minister. The optimism and transparent maneuvering for political advancement has been replaced by bitterness and cynicism.

¶14. (C) Mbusa is rumored to be on the way out in the next cabinet reshuffle and his comments suggest that, mentally, he has already checked out. Unsurprisingly, Mbusa thought little of Kambasu Ngere, the CNDP Secretary General who is widely rumored to be poised to move into the cabinet to take Mbusa's place as the senior ethnic Nande in the government; like so many others, to Mbusa, Kambasu is "just a bandit."

¶15. (C) Mbusa's evident lack of connection with the Nande community in the Grand Nord was surprising considering how influential he had been. In a subsequent conversation with a senior advisor to PARECO Nande military commander Sikuli La

Fontaine, we were told that Mbusa's decline as a Nande leader came very recently, with his cabinet demotion. Whereas his prestige amongst the Nande had grown when he joined the government as Minister of Regional Cooperation and was boosted further when he was given the foreign ministry portfolio, his demotion last year caused his credibility and legitimacy to collapse. When asked to explain the link between Mbusa's influence in the east and his influence in Kinshasa, we were told, "it's simple. He no longer has power in Kinshasa, therefore he no longer has power in the East."

End comment.

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